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| **Televised message by the President of the Republic, Mr Nicos Anastasiades, on the occasion of the anniversary of Cyprus Independence****30/09/2013** |
| Dear compatriots,Upon the completion of 53 years since the declaration and establishment of the Republic of Cyprus I address the Cypriot people to convey the deepest feelings of appreciation, respect and honour.At the same time I pay tribute to the leaders and fighters of the epic 1955-59, the law-enforcing officers and the volunteers who defended the existence of the Republic of Cyprus in 1963-64, as well as those who defended the Republic and the country during the coup and the barbaric Turkish invasion, contributing with their sacrifice to the safeguarding of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus.This year’s 53rd anniversary of the declaration of the Republic of Cyprus finds our country in a particularly difficult state. We are, undoubtedly, going through the most critical period since the 1974 Turkish invasion. We have never before had to deal with so many accumulated challenges and deadlocks at a national, economic and social level.Longstanding problems and pathogeneses of the system. Indecision, reticence and fear to take on responsibilities in the past. Political weaknesses, petty politics and ambitions, as well as erroneous strategic choices and prejudices, brought our country on the verge of destruction.If we engaged in politics with prudence and realism, if we measured properly the conditions and the balances of power, if we made the right decisions with courage and responsibility at the right time, we would most likely have avoided the national misfortunes and the dire economic situation we experience today.What I say should not be inferred as criticism directed to specific recipients. It is time, by objectively evaluating the past, to look together into the future, move forward, regroup our strengths and revive our country.We must be sincere with the citizens. It is time we ought to acknowledge, with self-awareness, self-criticism and courage, the mistakes made by all of us. We must acknowledge the reasons why our country went from a place of prosperity, stability, safety and security on the verge of economic but also national bankruptcy.Dear compatriots,The basic strategic goals we have to set, but mainly to achieve, are the following:1. To reform and reconstruct the state. The state of the 60’s has completed its life cycle. The time has come to build a new state model that meets the needs of the new era. A state that respects and serves the citizen, restores meritocracy and social justice, inspires trust but also defines the responsibilities of politicians managing public affairs and national wealth.2. To address the economic crisis in a well-structured and disciplined manner, by creating conditions for growth with a view to overcoming the recession the soonest possible. In this respect boldness, decisiveness and optimal planning are required. The path we are obliged to follow is a difficult one. I am sure, though, that through the Government’s planning and policies, as well as through the understanding and cooperation of the political powers and our fellow-citizens we will be able to get back on our feet and feel as decent and proud as in the past.3. To redesign our foreign policy on the basis of the new geostrategic data; by utilizing our membership in the European Union; by building strategic alliances with important regional and transatlantic states, without this being to the disadvantage of traditional friends and allies. It is of utmost importance that the exercise of our foreign policy be driven, far from any exclusion, fixations, and biases, by the bona fide interests of our homeland.4. Our top priority should be ending the occupation and reuniting our country through conditions that will allow all Cypriots, without exception, to live in peace in a state that does not lack values and human rights compared to the rest of the European states.It is high time for all of us to comprehend that the evolution of the Republic of Cyprus to a federal state entity, if then was a painful compromise, today has become an inevitable national need.It is my belief that all the political powers but also our people, neither of whom lack patriotism, wish and aim at getting rid of occupational troops, ending the illegal settlement and stopping our occupied territory from becoming Turkish, ending the alienation of Greek Cypriot properties and deterring Hellenism from downsizing.However, instead of giving priority to reasonable concerns, we should give priority to a comprehensive solution plan that, while deterring the dangers above, will at the same time create conditions for the attainment of decent solution. A solution that will disregard neither the concerns of the Greek Cypriots nor, most importantly, the human rights of the European citizens of Cyprus.At this point I believe I should address our Turkish Cypriot compatriots and send them the message that, while our sincere will and determination to reach a solution should be taken for granted, they should not expect that we could ever possibly accept a solution that would not meet the Greek Cypriots’ expectations or that would render the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots second-class citizens of the EU.Besides, the dangers mentioned above with respect to the Greek Cypriots apply equally to the Turkish Cypriots themselves.At the same time, addressing the Turkish Government, I call upon it to respond positively to our proposals for substantive confidence-building measures so as to create a new hopeful dynamic, if we wish for a creative dialogue to be resumed that will bear positive results.Dear compatriots,I hope that the 53rd anniversary of our independence will constitute the commencement of a new era which will signify the termination of the tribulations we have been experiencing until today.I feel completely confident that we all want, can and will achieve our goals and realize our visions, as long as we are united. Cyprus may soon become a different country; a European, united, strong and secure country, an actor of peace and stability in our region. |

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